



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

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COUNCIL APPROVES STIFFER PENALTIES TO PROTECT COUNTY FORESTS

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The Montgomery County Council today unanimously approved legislation to impose stiffer penalties for violations of the County's forest conservation law.

The legislation, sponsored by Councilmember Steve Silverman, was prompted by an earlier settlement agreement between the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission and Washington Redskins owner Daniel Snyder over removal of mature trees on the Snyder property next to the C&O Canal in Potomac. Currently, the County's forest conservation law has a maximum penalty of only \$1 per square foot.

"We need to put real teeth into our law to preserve our County's forests," said Councilmember Silverman. "The current \$1 per square foot penalty is miniscule."

The legislation removes the current \$1 per square foot maximum penalty from the County forest conservation law. The new penalty will be a minimum of \$3 per square foot up to a maximum of \$9 per square foot. Damage that encompassed one acre would face fines ranging from \$130,000 to \$392,000. The County Council will set the new upper limits by resolution, which allows for easier and quicker adjustments in maximum fines.

The bill was cosponsored by Councilmembers Phil Andrews, Howard Denis, Nancy Floreen, Marilyn Praisner and Michael Subin.

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